17: Erman--299 [2] N-3 (1828-29) 1850 Yakut
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"No less peculiar is the food of these people; they all prefer horse flesh to beef, but are so careful of their cattle that none but the richest slaughter any regularly, the rest only on festivals and special occasions. At wedding feasts all the guests are treated with beef, and the bride serves up to her future lord a boiled horse's head, garnished with a kind of sausage made of horse flesh. Far more important to the majority of the Yakuts is the milk of their cows and mares. In summer they have the greatest abundance of it, and then they use it unmixed in making many dishes. For winter they keep a stock of milk in vessels of birch bark, and with a certain quantity of it, thinned with water, and some vegetable substances, they make their daily porridge. It is only in the neighbourhood of the Russians that they can procure flour for this purpose; in the remoter yurts, the under bark of the fir and larch supplies the ordinary material of bread. This is pounded in a mortar, made, like the walls of the yurts themselves, of cow-dung laid on basket work, and frozen hard."

was associated with the severe frost; this was a particular type of fur collar or mooyturuk made from rings of squirrel tails, so that the fur stood out on all sides; this collar was put round the neck in cold weather and covered both the nose and mouth; as the wearer breathed on it and the breath gradually froze, he kept moving it round so that there was always a dry spot opposite the mouth. 291

The Yakut heavy fur mittens were made with space for one finger and were attached by laces, by which they hung when taken off.

Typical of the footwear (eterbes) were high kneeboots made of undressed reindeer- or horse-hide, with the hair on the outside. The summer boots (sasry) were made of soft leather with a soft sole; the top part was covered with cloth and in the case of women with embroidery; the tops of the boots were tied with laces. Underneath the top footwear they wore high stockings (keenche) made of fur, or, later, cloth made in the shape of the foot. Linings of dry grass were also put inside the boots, and frequently changed.

The decorations on the women's clothing were particularly lavish and varied. Apart from various types of embroidery, appliqué and trimming, women also wore metal (silver) adornments, including large pendants consisting of rows of interlinked parallel, patterned chains hanging from a semicircle (kyl'd'yy), silver earrings of the pendant type (*имарҕа*), various patterned bracelets (*бөҕөх*), finger-rings (*бүһүлэх*), silver crucifixes (Christian influence) on massive openwork chains and so forth; all these embellishments, chiefly possessed by the toyon women, were very skillfully made by the Yakut smiths. [531] 301 326

As regards children's clothing, there was no special type. In the poorer families, the children ran about naked or wore rags; the children of wealthier parents wore the same kind of garments as the adults, except for the size and greater number of adornments. 291

Food

The diet of the Yakuts from the central ulusy before the Revolution consisted first of dairy products, second, fish products, after which came vegetable products, and, finally, meat. The variety, amount and quality of the food ranged between very wide limits in the various class groups. Dairy products were consumed mainly during the summer, and as far as possible stored up for the winter. Mare's milk was chiefly used to make kumys, a refreshing, nutritious and slightly intoxicating beverage, which the Yakuts drank readily and in large quantities. During the haymaking kumys was sometimes the staple diet; a great deal of it was drunk at summer festivals (*ысыах*—the kumys festival). Over the last few decades before the Revolution, on account of the decline in horse-breeding and the development of agriculture, the comsumption of kumys dropped more and more. Mare's milk was not stocked for the winter. Cow's milk was not used very much in the fresh form, but was used to make a greater variety of products. First place among them was taken by the so-called suorat, or sora, a particular kind of thick sour milk with or without some cream added. In summer fresh suorat was the commonest food, but it was also used to make winter stocks; for this purpose it was kept in large birchbark vats, to which were added berries (blueberries), roots, bones (which dissolved in the lactic acid) and any left-over milk product, and as winter approached, the whole lot was frozen and kept in that form. The resulting tar was used in wintertime to make the drink butugas, to which was added, apart from the tar, water, a little flour, pine sapwood, roots, and so on. Cream skimmed from the milk was used in the fresh, whipped form; it was called *күөрэх*, highly 262 [527]